

# Tetelcingo Nahuatl

**Tetelcingo Nahuatl**, called *Mösiehuali* by its speakers, is a Nahuatl variety of central Mexico. It is one of the core varieties closely related to Classical Nahuatl. It is spoken in the town of Tetelcingo, Morelos, and the adjacent *Colonia* Cuauhémoc and Colonia Lázaro Cárdenas. These three population centers lie to the north of Cuautla, Morelos and have been largely absorbed into its urban area; as a result the Tetelcingo language and culture are under intense pressure.

In 1935 William Cameron Townsend published a study of Mösiehuali, and a number of other studies have been published since then.

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## Phonology

### Vowels

Tetelcingo Nahuatl has converted the distinction of vowel quantity found in more conservative varieties into one of vowel quality. The short vowels /i e a o/ are reflected as [ɪ e a o] (orthographically *i e a o*) in Tetelcingo, while the long vowels /iː eː aː oː/ become [i ɔ e ɔ a u] (orthographically *i ie ö a u*).

“Short” Vowels	Front	Central	Back
<u>Close</u>	<u>i</u> [ɪ]		
<u>Mid</u>	<u>e</u> [e]		<u>o</u> [o]
<u>Open</u>		<u>a</u> [a]	

## Tetelcingo Nahuatl

### Mösiehuali

**Pronunciation** [mɔ̃s̥i'e'walɪ]

**Native to** Mexico

**Region** Morelos

**Native speakers** (3,500 cited 1990 census)<sup>[1]</sup>

**Language family** Uto-Aztecán

- Aztecán (Nahuan)
- Nahuatl
- Central Nahuatl
- Nuclear
- **Tetelcingo Nahuatl**

### Language codes

**ISO 639-3** nhg

**Glottolog** tete1251 (<http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/tete1251>)<sup>[2]</sup>

“Long” Vowels	Front	Central	Back
Close	i [i]		u [u]
Mid	ie [ <sup>i</sup> e]		
Open			ö [ɔ <sup>a</sup> ]

## Consonants

	Bilabial	Apical		Palato-alveolar	Velar		Glottal
		Central	Lateral		Unrounded	Rounded	
<b>Stops</b>	p /p/	t /t/			c ~ qu /k/	cu /kʷ/	
<b>Affricates</b>		tz /ts/	tl /tɬ/	ch /tʃ/			
<b>Fricatives</b>		s /s/		x /ʃ/			j /h ~ χ/
<b>Nasals</b>	m /m/	n /n ~ ɳ/					
<b>Approximants</b>	hu/u/b/f /w ~ ʊ ~ β ~ v ~ φ ~ w/	r /r/	l /l ~ ɬ/	y /j/			

Tetelcingo Nahuatl, like many dialects of Nahuatl, does not have voiced obstruent consonants (with one clear exception: the stem /maga/, meaning 'fight' is derived from /maka/ 'give, hit'). Voiced obstruents and other non-native consonants do occur in loanwords from Spanish, however, and there are many such words in the language.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Honorifics

Another striking characteristic of Tetelcingo Nahuatl is the pervasiveness and complexity of its honorifics. Generally every 2nd or 3rd person verb, pronoun, postposition or possessed noun must be marked honorifically if its subject or object, designatum, object or possessor (respectively) is a living adult (the speaker's wife or adult children being exceptions). Extra-honorific forms of several kinds exist, especially for addressing or referring to godparental relations, high officials or God. Many third person honorifics use morphemes that in Classical Nahuatl were used to mark non-active (passive) verbs or unspecified or plural participants. Not infrequently a different (suppletive) stem is used for honorifics, or the honorific form is in some other way irregular.

A few examples are given below, using the orthography of Brewer and Brewer 1962. Where more than one form is listed, the second is more highly honorific.

Stem Meaning	2nd person sg	2nd person sg honorific	3rd person sg	3rd person sg honorific
<b>pronoun</b>	taja	tejuatzi	yaja	yejuatzi
<b>one's house</b>	mocal	mocaltzi	ical	tiecal, tiecaltzi
<b>before</b>	mixpa	mixpantzinco	ixpa	tieixpa, tieixpantzinco
<b>go</b>	tiya	tomobica	yabi	biloa, mobica
<b>come</b>	tibitz	timobicatz, tihualmobica	ibitz	biloatz, hualmobica
<b>notice it, get it (a point)</b>	tiquijtilia	tomojtililia	quijtilia	quijtililo
<b>say it</b>	tiquijtoa	tomojtalfia	quijtoa	quijtulo

## References

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1. [Tetelcingo Nahuatl](https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/nhg/) (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/nhg/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Tetelcingo Nahuatl" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/tete1251>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. <http://www.sil.org/mexico/nahuatl/tetelcingo/25i-Borrowings-nhg.htm>

## External links

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- [Mösiehuali \(SIL Mexico\)](http://www.sil.org/mexico/nahuatl/tetelcingo/00i-Tetelcingo-NHG.htm) (<http://www.sil.org/mexico/nahuatl/tetelcingo/00i-Tetelcingo-NHG.htm>) – includes sound recordings
- [Mösiehuali Honorifics](http://www.sil.org/mexico/nahuatl/tetelcingo/27i-Honorifics-nhg.htm) (<http://www.sil.org/mexico/nahuatl/tetelcingo/27i-Honorifics-nhg.htm>) – includes sound recordings
- [Spanish loans in Mösiehuali](http://www.sil.org/mexico/nahuatl/tetelcingo/25i-Borrowings-nhg.htm) (<http://www.sil.org/mexico/nahuatl/tetelcingo/25i-Borrowings-nhg.htm>) – includes sound recordings
- [Texts in Mösiehuali](http://www.sil.org/~tuggyd/tetel/20i-TextosMosiehuali-nhg.htm) (<http://www.sil.org/~tuggyd/tetel/20i-TextosMosiehuali-nhg.htm>)

## Literature

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- Brewer, Forrest, y Jean G. Brewer. 1962. *Vocabulario mexicano de Tetelcingo*. Vocabularios indígenas "Mariano Silva y Aceves" 8. México: Instituto Lingüístico de Verano.
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- Tuggy, David. 1981. [Electronic version 2008](http://www.sil.org/~tuggyd/Dissert/DTuggy-Dissertation-CG-nhg.htm) (<http://www.sil.org/~tuggyd/Dissert/DTuggy-Dissertation-CG-nhg.htm>). *The transitivity-related verbal morphology of Tetelcingo Nahuatl: an exploration in Space [Cognitive] grammar*. UC San Diego doctoral dissertation.

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